SFD Dispatch Policy and Guideline Manual
Section Title: Radio Communication Standards
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RADIO CALL SIGN

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) radio call sign for the Springdale Fire Department is WNNO 487.

CENTRAL DISPATCH AND RADIO COMMUNICATION STANDARDS

Fire dispatch operations are managed by the Springdale Emergency Dispatch Center. Fire dispatch operations shall be identified on the radio as "Springdale". Dispatchers initiating a transmission shall state "Springdale" to the unit or station they are calling.

Example: *"Springdale to Truck 1"*

Do not use unnecessary prefixes such as "That will be a...", "That's a...", "We have a report of...", or "Respond to a...". The use of slang or foul language is not acceptable on the fire radio. The patient's name shall not be announced over the radio unless specifically requested by a unit in the field.

VOICE CLARITY

The transmit button shall be keyed for at least 2 seconds prior to talking so the radio system repeater has time to activate. Failing to allow the radio system repeater to activate before talking will cause the first part of the transmission to be cut off. The dispatcher shall speak clearly and slowly with normal volume and tone on all radio transmissions.

In noisy fire engines it is difficult to understand radio traffic when a diesel engine is running and a siren is sounding. This problem has been taken into consideration when radio speakers are installed in all SFD apparatus. Radio / voice headsets have been installed in all engines, ladder trucks, and the rescue to enhance the ability of firefighters to hear over the diesel engine and siren. It is necessary for dispatchers to be mindful of this problem and enunciate slowly and clearly on every radio transmission on the SFD radio system.

FREQUENCY DESIGNATIONS

- FIRE 1   Main Dispatch Frequency
- TACTICAL 1   Tactical 1 Frequency
- TACTICAL 2   Tactical 2 Frequency
- TACTICAL 3   Tactical 3 Frequency
- FIRE 2   Alternate Dispatch Frequency
- HOSPITAL   Northwest Medical Center Hospital Frequency

ORDER MODEL

Radio communications will be regulated by the following order model guidelines:

1. Sender will give unit ID and call the receiver by their unit ID.
2. Receiver will give their ID to indicate they are ready to receive.
3. Sender will then extend message or order.
4. Receiver will give ID and and acknowledge receipt of message. A brief restatement of the message will be included.
5. Dispatch will acknowledge all communications directed to it by a brief restatement of the message, with particular attention given to repeating on the scene, size up, progress reports, recall reports, request for additional resources, and all incident status changes and benchmarks.

Example: Battalion 1   *"Battalion 1 to Springdale."*
             Springdale   *"Springdale to Battalion 1 go ahead."*
             Battalion 1   "*Springdale, Dispatch Engine 2 to the fire."*
             Springdale   *"Springdale copies dispatch Engine 2 to the fire."*

STANDARD AND BENCHMARK RADIO PHRASES

In compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the following standard and benchmark radio phrases will be used exclusively.

- **Unreadable:** The listening unit / station can not understand traffic, either due to radio difficulties, or due to background noise.

- Example: *"Squad 1 you are unreadable due to low volume, repeat your traffic."*

- **Loud and Clear:** The listening unit / station is receiving well. This should only be necessary if a unit asks for a radio check.

- Example: *"Springdale to Truck 1, you are loud and clear."*

- **Negative:** No

- **Copy:** Acknowledgement of an order or message. When a unit gives you incidental information that is not a benchmark phrase, acknowledge by saying, "Springdale copies ... (repeating the information)."

- Examples: *"Truck 1 to Springdale, gas company on scene."*
  "Springdale copies, gas company on scene."

  "Holcomb Command to Springdale, contact SWEPCO."
  "Springdale copies, contact SWEPCO."

  "Maple Command to Springdale, dispatch an additional engine."
  "Springdale Copies, dispatch an additional engine."

By repeating the information, there is verification that the message is understood, or that the request is being facilitated. Once a request is facilitated, the incident commander should be notified immediately.

Copy" is unnecessary if a unit calls with a benchmark message such as "In Service", or "On the Air" or "On Scene", etc. Just repeat the message as always without saying "Springdale copies".

Example: *"Truck 1 to Springdale, in service."*   *"Truck 1 in service."*

- **Command Reports:** When command gives a benchmark phrase which should be logged, such as "Under Control", "No Transport, "Extrication Complete", "All Clear" or "Return all units to service", rather than saying "Springdale Copies", say "Command Reports Under Control", or "Command Reports No Transport" or "Command Reports return all units return to service". By repeating the message, it is verification that the message was understood. All other units needing the information will hear it a second time from Dispatch.

- **Affirmative:** Yes

- **Call:** Call by phone

    Example: *"Blind call Firefighter Smith, call Station 1."*

- **Location:** Dispatcher is requesting a unit's location.

    Example: *"What is your location?"*

- **Out of Service:** The unit is unavailable for a response. If indicated, a brief reason for being out of service may be added.

    Example: *"Squad 1 out of service for repairs."*

- **In Service:** The unit is available for a response. If the unit is returning to service after a call, it will be assumed that the unit is returning to quarters. If the unit is going on the air out of their FMA/AMA, the unit shall state this information when they advise they are in service.

    Example: *"Engine 2 in service, on the air for fuel."*

- **In Quarters:** The unit is in its assigned station.

    Example: Engine 5   *"Engine 5 in quarters."*
                   Springdale   *"Engine 5 in quarters."*

- **On the Air:** If a unit is out of the station, but still available for a response, that unit is considered "On the Air". All units, except administrative units will announce "On the Air" upon leaving the station. An "On the Air" message is considered a non-emergency message and therefore must wait for emergency traffic to clear first.

    Example: Squad 1   *"Squad 1 on the air FMA 2."*
                         Springdale   *"Squad 1 on the air FMA 2."*

- **Responding:** The unit has actively begun it's response to a call. Responding Code 3 shall be assumed, unless the unit wouldn't normally respond Code 3 for the type of call dispatched. If a Code 1 response is indicated, the unit shall report "Responding Code 1."

- **On Scene:** The unit has arrived on the scene of an incident. The first unit on scene gives a size-up. The first officer on scene assumes command.

- **Patient Contact:** The time that needs to be logged when actual patient contact is made by SFD personnel. Normally used during staging calls or other calls wtih a delay to patient contact after reaching the scene.

- **Command:** The first officer on scene will assume command by saying: Unit ID, On Scene, Geographic Location, Command. If indicated, the message should also include a brief size-up and whether units should switch to a tactical frequency. It is not necessary to establish command if one unit is on scene.

    Example: *"Battalion 1 on scene, Holcomb Command, one story single family dwelling, nothing showing, Tact 1."*

    If units arrive on scene simultaneosly and one unit announces on scene for all units, the unit assuming command shall make the announcement.

    Example: *"Truck 1, Squad 1, on scene, Truck 1 Holcomb Command."*

- **All Clear:** Announced when a search of a structure has revealed no victims, or confirmation that everyone is out of the structure. In fire situations there will be a quick primary search, followed by a more extensive secondary search. In those cases, units will say "Primary, All Clear" and "Secondary, All Clear".

- **All Clear (NWMC):** When Northwest Medical Center has an active fire alarm, the hospital operator will call an "All Clear" if NWMC personnel finds no fire.

- **Under Control:** The fire has been contained, and will not extend. It does not mean the fire is out. It might also be used during a hazardous materials incident indicating a leak has been secured. The Under Control benchmark is not necessary on EMS calls but may be used on certain rescue calls or other special incidents.

- **Extrication Complete:** This is the benchmark noting the time that the patient has been extricated. Dispatch should log this time for future reference, so the incident commander may know how long an extrication operation took to complete.

- **Transporting:** A squad is leaving the scene and is enroute to the hospital with the patient. In addition to announcing "Transporting", the squad will include the number of patients, the destination hospital, and the beginning mileage. The dispatcher is not to repeat the mileage unless it needs to be confirmed.

Examples:	Squad 1	*"Squad 1 transporting one patient to Northwest Medical Center, beginning mileage 345.6."*
	Springdale	*"Squad 1 transporting one patient to Northwest Medical Center."*

- **At Destination:** A squad has arrived at the destination hospital. Instead of saying "At destination," the dispatcher will say "At Northwest," or "At WRMC," or "At Mercy," or "At Northwest of Benton County,". The dispatcher is not to repeat the ending mileage unless it needs to be confirmed.

Examples:	Squad 1	*"Squad 1 at Northwest Medical Center, ending mileage 409.8."*
	Springdale	*"Squad 1 at Northwest Medical Center."*

- **May Day:** The radio message "May Day" will be used by firefighters to report their status as being lost, trapped, or injured and needing immediate rescue. Any member may use "May Day" to report a lost firefighter. Any report of "May Day" will receive priority radio traffic. Command will notify all personnel to maintain radio silence to allow the firefighter(s) calling the May Day to continue giving information.

  The term "May Day" will be reserved ONLY to report a lost, trapped or injured firefighter(s). The term "Emergency Traffic" will be used to report all other emergencies. During training operations for a simulated May Day, firefighters will use the term "May Day Drill". If a member says "May Day" during a training operation, it will be assumed that the "May Day" call is real.

  When a firefighter announces a "May Day," the firefighter will announce his unit ID, the location he/she entered the building, where the firefighter thinks he/she is in the building, and other needs or resources to assist the firefighter and improve conditions for those personnel.

  Once all information is gathered, the Incident Commander shall activate the May Day Response Team. The Incident Commander shall notifiy fire dispatch on Fire 1 to dispatch two additional engines and 1 additional squad.

  The unit calling a "May Day" will receive the highest communications priority from dispatch, Incident command and all operating units. If a dispatcher monitors a "May Day" message that is not immediately acknowledged by the incident commander, the dispatcher shall **immediately** make command aware of the "May Day" message. Also, if a "May Day" message is inadvertantly transmitted on another channel which may not be monitored by command, dispatch shall notify command immediately. In this case, dispatch shall also advise the unit transmitting the "May Day" that the transmission has been recieved and that dispatch is advising command of the "May Day" situation. Dispatch should not advise the unit to change channels and shall remain in radio contact with the unit until the situation is succesfully resolved.

- **Emergency Traffic:** The term "Emergency Traffic" will be utilized by an unit encountering an immediately perilous situation. Units will declare emergency communications by verbally contacting dispatch or command.

  The unit calling "Emergency Traffic" will receive the second highest communications priority from dispatch, Incident command and all operating units. If a dispatcher monitors an "Emergency Traffic" message that is not immediately acknowledged by the incident commander, the dispatcher shall make command aware of the "Emergency Traffic" message immediately. Also, if an "Emergency Traffic" message is inadvertantly transmitted on another channel which may not be monitored by command, dispatch should notify command immediately and advise the unit transmitting the "Emergency Traffic" message what channel they are transmitting over.

- **PAR:** PAR means Personnel Accountability Report. When command requests a "PAR," each officer in charge of a crew on the scene will verify the number of personnel accounted for in the crew. Command will initiate a roll call of each crew on scene, and the officer will announce PAR x number of personnel assigned and accounted for and if applicable the number of personnel unaccounted for.

EMERGENCY "ZERO" CODE PROCEDURE

The Emergency "Zero" Code is to be used by fire department personnel only for an EMERGENCY REQUEST FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE. Fire department personnel will use the "Zero" code when they encounter a confrontational situation where IMMEDIATE LAW ENFORCEMENT INTERVENTION is needed. The situation will consist of a person or persons that are presenting a significant physical threat to the safety of personnel (physical fight in progress, weapons involved, etc.) and the situation may become intensified if those involved are aware that law enforcement is being called.

Fire department personnel will transmit the "Zero" code by stating: *"Zero _____ (unit #)"* and repeating the transmission.   Whenever dispatch receives a "Zero" code, dispatch personnel shall acknowledge the receipt and understanding of the code by transmitting back to the fire department unit *"Springdale copies, Zero _____ (Unit #)".* Fire department personnel are trained to listen for the acknowledgement from dispatch with no further radio

traffic transmitted.

<u>DISPATCH PERSONNEL SHALL IMMEDIATELY DISPATCH LAW ENFORCEMENT UNITS TO THE SCENE CODE 3.</u>

<u>NO REFERENCE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT IS TO BE MADE.</u> Dispatch shall not request any further information from the fire department unit transmitting the zero code unless the units advise that they are in a safe location. Dispatch personnel must ensure the volume to the speaker for the Tactical 3 channel is turned up and pay attention for the fire department personnel attempting to move to a safe location to provide additional data. If the threat is resolved or diminished before Law Enforcement arrives, fire department personnel who placed the zero code shall advise dispatch so that the police department response can be downgraded.

ALL CALL TONE

The ALL CALL alert tone is a long single tone that activates all SFD fire station monitors and all SFD pagers. This tone is used in place of having to alert each individual station in the event that a message needs to be given to all SFD personnel. The ALL CALL is used to alert the entire department of a Tornado Warning in Washington or Benton County or if an actual tornado touches down within the city limits of Springdale, or when a special call is made for additional firefighters for a significant incident.

EMERGENCY TONE

The EMERGENCY TONE is ALERT 2 on the dispatch radio console. If the Incident Commander determines that a structure is not stable while firefighters are actively trying to suppress the fire, then the Incident Commander may advise the dispatcher to transmit the EMERGENCY TONE (ALERT 2) on all SFD frequencies. The dispatcher will press and hold the button marked "SUMUL-SELECT" and press the "SELECT CALL" button for Fire 1, TAC1, TAC2, and TAC3. Once all channels are selected, transmit the tone for 8 - 10 seconds. No announcement will be made, only the tone given out. This unique attention signal will alert all SFD personnel who are inside a burning building to evacuate immediately.

During the period of time immediately after the EMERGENCY TONE is sounded until the Incident Commander determines that all SFD personnel are clear of the burning building and safe, total radio silence shall be maintained by the dispatcher.

The dispatcher shall log the time that the EMERGENCY TONE was transmitted in the radio log that pertains to the incident.

To reset the radio channels to resume normal operations, press the "SELECT CALL" button for the Fire 1 channel.

ATTENTION TONE

There are times when special announcements are to be made via the SFD radio system which require the attention of all SFD personnel; however the announcement is not an emergency. ALERT 1 is used for this purpose. ALERT 1 is a single 1000Hz (thousand cycle) tone which should be transmitted for 5 to 6 seconds followed by the special announcement, the call sign or the current time. Examples of special announcements would be officer meetings, street closures, and hospital diversion status.

Example: *"Springdale to all listening stations and units, Northwest Medical Center is on divert. Station clear 0915."*

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND BLIND CALLS

Many of the firefighters have scanners or two-way radios on the SFD frequencies. For this reason, it is possible to contact SFD personnel by calling them on the SFD radio system. A blind call is used when a dispatcher, Firefighter, or Fire Officer makes a request over the radio for a particular member of the department to call the person making the request.

Many SFD annoucements may be given at the end of the Daily Alert Tone Test. Other non-emergency announcements may be required at other times. Refer to the ATTENTION TONE portion for an example of how to give a non-emergency message. Do not utilize the ATTENTION TONE on Blind Calls.

Example on following page.

Example:

Scenario
The Station 1 Captain calls the dispatcher on the telephone and request the dispatcher to blind call Firefighter Smith to call Station 1.

Dispatcher: *"Springdale Fire Department blind call Firefighter James Smith, call Fire Station 1. Station Clear 0845 hours or WNNO 487."*

STATION TONES

Each Springdale Fire Station is equipped with a tone activated alerting system. This system activates emergency speakers and lighting at all SFD fire stations.

SFD Station 1	STA 1
SFD Station 2	STA 2
SFD Station 3	STA 3
SFD Station 4	STA 4
SFD Station 5	STA 5
SFD Station 6	STA 6
SFD Stations 1 – 6	ALL CALL
Lowell	STA 41
Tontitown	STA 51
Johnson	STA 61
Nob Hill / Sonora	STA 71
Hickory Creek / Pleasure Heights	CALL CENCOM BY PHONE
Fayetteville	FAY ASST

CANCELING TONES

If the wrong alert tone is inadvertently transmitted, simply tell the station to disregard the tone by saying, "Station ___, disregard tone." Then continue with the rest of the dispatch. If the dispatcher recognizes the mistake before the transmitting of the alert tone, the dispatcher may press the Page Clear button to cancel the tone.   If any part of the incorrect tone is transmitted, the dispatcher shall advise that station to disregard the tone.

DAILY ALERT TONE TEST

The Springdale Fire Department daily alert tone test is conducted each day at 0810 hours. The purpose of this test is to test the station alerting systems, to announce any special annoucements for the day, and it signals to the firefighters that it is time to start their daily equipment checks if they haven't already started.

The daily alert tone test shall not be conducted while there are active incidents.

The dispatcher conducting the alert tone shall log in the daily radio log that the test was completed or was not completed The reason for not completing the test should be logged.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
STA 1	STA 3	STA 5	STA 41	STA 61	STA 71	ALL CALL
STA 2	STA 4	STA 6	STA 51		FAY FD	ALERT 2

REQUEST FOR ALERT TONE TEST

If an alert tone test is requested by a station or by radio service personnel, announce the following message before and after the tone test: "Alert tone test for (say what unit or station is needing the tone test)."

Example: Station 1 request an alert tone test for station 1. The dispatcher will announce, *"Alert tone test for Station 1",* transmit the station 1 tone, announce, *"Alert tone test for Station 1, station clear, (give the current time)."*

RADIO DIFFICULTIES

If a dispatcher notices technical difficulties with any of the radio or alerting equipment, the following personnel needs to be notified:

- Dispatch Manager
- SFD Shift Commander
- SFD Operations Division Chief
- Assistant Fire Chief
- SFD Fire Chief